

Recycling and Composting Update – Summer 2014

As Howard County continues to expand its recycling and waste collection offerings, and implements best practices to protect the environment and seek efficiencies, savings continue to accrue to Howard County residents.

Savings From Recycling

Howard County established a single-stream co-mingled recycled program in 200. Since then, the amount of waste collected has gone down, and the amount of recyclable materials has gone up.

As the chart below shows, Howard County has increased its recycling tonnage each year since 2007. Because that material was diverted from the waste stream, Howard County taxpayers saved \$943,328 dollars in tipping fees.

Year	Increased Recycling Tonnage	Waste Tip Fee	Yearly Savings
2008	2,632.00	\$34.00	\$89,488.00
2009	5,442.00	\$34.00	\$185,028.00
2010	5,235.00	\$34.00	\$177,990.00
2011	5,843.00	\$34.00	\$198,662.00
2012	5,090.00	\$34.00	\$173,060.00
2013	3,500.00	\$34.00	\$119,000.00
			\$943,228.00

The County also receives proceeds from selling recycled materials. It has received \$787,058 since 2007, as the following chart shows:

Year	Tons	Average Ton Rate	Yearly Revenue
2008	2,632.00	\$48.34	\$127,230.88
2009	5,442.00	\$6.78	\$36,896.76
2010	5,235.00	\$24.96	\$30,665.60
2011	5,843.00	\$55.07	\$21,774.01
2012	5,090.00	\$24.13	\$22,821.70
2013	3,500.00	\$13.62	\$47,670.00
			\$787,058.95

From all sources, the total savings from single stream recycling has been \$1,730,286 since 2007, or an average of \$288,381 per year.

Savings From Food Scrap and Yard Waste Diversion and Composting

In 2013, Howard County opened a unique food scrap and yard trim collection and composting facility, at Alpha Ridge Landfill, and expanding its food scrap collection program to the second of 15 collection zones, with a third zone to be added in 2014.

The net cost of collecting, transporting, composting and then selling the end product of food scraps and yard waste at our compost facility is \$38.50 per ton. Had Howard County not opened the facility, the cost to pay a contractor to collect the material was \$65 a ton. We estimate that between food scraps diverted, and the county yard trim pick up program, we are saving \$100,000 annually.

So, total combine of the two programs is nearly \$400,000 a year in savings.

These programs make environmental sense, economic sense, and will continue to expand.